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By focusing so exclusively on rules and standards of operations, the intelligence debate of the mid-1970s did not answer the fundamental question of what the United States expects of its intelligence services or what they are to accomplish in order to meet the challenges of the 1980s.

The Substance and the Rules

Since the early 1970s, this country's intelligence agencies have been asking, "What does the country expect of us?" That question had not arisen in the postwar period because the American political system had left the agencies to the total discretion of those appointed to lead them. In the early 1970s, factional conflict among those leaders spilled over into a national debate about what America's practitioners of intelligence ought to have foremost in mind. That debate continues.

Recently, Admiral Stansfield Turner, President Carter's Director of Central Intelligence, and his former special assistant, George Thibault, published an attempt both to answer that question and to indict the Reagan administration's handling of intelligence. The author's answer seems to be that the American people expect their intelligence agencies to be as innocuous as possible. They charge that the Reagan administration is undermining the agencies by loosening too many restrictions. The authors thus contend that for our civil liberties' sake, and for the sake of the agencies' own standing in the country, the agencies ought to concentrate on formulating for themselves the right kinds of rules and restrictions. However, one would not suspect from Turner and Thibault's article, that the rules by which intelligence officers live ought to flow from the intelligence profession's substantive requirements.

Nevertheless, in intelligence as in other areas of government, the American people rightly want their employees to accomplish the functions for which they are paid. This author will argue that Stansfield Turner is

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